

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE  
PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK**

**SPEECH BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR. AT THE CEBUANA  
LHULLIER KANEGOSYO CENTER LAUNCH**

[Delivered at the Palacio de Memoria in Roxas Boulevard in Parañaque City | 29 June 2023]

Thank you to our Interior and Local Government Secretary, Secretary Benhur Abalos. *[Please take your seats.]*

The other members of the Cabinet who are here present; and of course, Jean Henri Lhuillier, the President and CEO of the PJ Lhuillier Group of Companies; fellow workers in government; ladies and gentlemen; and of course, our partners in the private sector; other distinguished guests, good morning.

Well, this is turning out to be a truly productive and exciting day, as we witness the launch of yet another promising endeavor to support our drive to uplift the economy.

Let me congratulate, of course, the PJ Lhuillier Group of Companies and its flagship brand — Cebuana Lhuillier — as you launch the much-anticipated by everyone, myself included, much-anticipated *Kanegosyo Center*. *[applause]*

I think it serves as a bit of a background as to how all of these occurred. The truth of the matter is this discussion started between the Ambassador, our Ambassador to Spain, Ambassador Philippe Lhuillier when I was in Spain in 2020, where I managed to contract COVID also.

But nonetheless, when I was with him, we were talking about this and we were talking about how we can help small – because of his exposure and his great experience when it came to dealing with small businesses and how to assist them. And it was a remarkable conversation, it went on over a few days. And at some point, he said my son is actually working on precisely that.

And so, but as I said, COVID set in, so na-postpone lahat ng aming usapan for about two years. But we were able to finally meet each other during the campaign – it was already during the campaign.

And Jean Henri was saying that he had plans precisely in the area that we were talking about with the Ambassador. And so if you look at it, it was really in terms of the involvement of the government, this has been three years in the making.

And I've been nagging actually Jean Henri and said, "*Nasaan na? Nasaan na? Where's our project? How do we get started?*"

And like a good businessman, he made sure that things were in place and that there were pilots of the different parts of the plan.

And now, we have now, he has put together this *Kanegosyo* and has put together a concept, a principle. Simple actually but it requires a good deal of organization, it requires a good deal of knowledge of what this market is and how we can do best to our MSMEs.

We have now extended the definition. MSMEs is micro, small, and [medium-sized] enterprises. We have begun to include what we call nano enterprises which are so small that they do not actually fall into any category of economic activity because they're way below the radar.

And so, these are the people that we are trying to help. And what we are trying to do here is first having recognized that the economies of the world, the economies of different countries, and the global economy has been fundamentally changed by the pandemic.

And that is why we have to do different things now. And that's why we were trying – the basic concept behind this is that we are trying to create an ecosystem for startups and that is really what we are trying to do.

We are trying to help small businesses who have a good idea. They want to put up a – I don't know garahe para magmemekaniko sila. Mayroon diyan magbubukas ng beauty parlor na maliit lang, dalawa lang, tatlong ano lang ang kliyente at a time. Mayroon diyan gagawa ng pagkain, magbe-baking, gagawa ng mamon, gagawa ng ano... Ito naman maliliit lang.

Ngunit kung hindi nila nauunawaan kung ano ba ang kailangang gawin, halimbawa, what would an ordinary housewife know on how to deal with a bank? How will the ordinary housewife know on how to account, how to keep books? That's why mayroon dito *Kanegosyo* Coach, tinuturuan nila.

And that's something that we've experienced before. The good basis that we have here in the Philippines is kakaunti lang talaga ang tamad na Pilipino. Karamihan ng Pilipino gustong magtrabaho. Kahit na binibigyan natin ng AICS, kahit binibigyan natin ng TUPAD, kahit binibigyan natin ng ayuda, at some point ang Pinoy sasabihin, "*Okay, maraming salamat. Nakatulong 'yan pero gusto kong magtrabaho. Hindi ko gusto 'yung basta nag-aantay lang ako ng handout.*" Wala sa ugali ng Pilipino 'yun.

And that's what we build on. And this is what *Kanegosyo* and all the other programs that are hoping to assist our small businesses, that is what we are trying to achieve.

Actually the idea began a few years back, a couple of decades back when the India model of microfinancing, where they brought the idea of something like P5,000 na puwedeng microfinance. The reason banks don't do microfinancing is because the work that is involved in giving a P10,000-loan is the same as the work that is involved in giving a P1-billion loan. So, let's go with the big bucks 'di ba. Matrabaho talaga. Matrabaho talaga.

That is why it is not something that is done just purely out of business instinct. It's not something that is done para kumita lang. It is something that is done para tumulong.

And that I think is the difference in what we see with these programs that are helping the MSMEs. That's why we can do nothing but applaud and continue to support all of the efforts such as *Kanegosyo*. All the efforts of our entrepreneurs teaching our upcoming entrepreneurs on how to do business. It's the only way that we can do.

I am sure you have heard the statistics ad infinitum: 99 percent of our businesses are MSMEs; 62, 63 percent of our working force are employed by MSMEs.

So, there is no way that if we are trying to help the economy, if we are trying to transform the economy, that we do not attend to that enormous slice of our economy.

Hindi lang 'yung malalaking korporasyon. Marami silang maitutulong. Ngunit ang gobyerno ay kailangang pumasok at tumulong and to encourage such programs as *Kanegosyo*.

And I was actually quite happy to see Joey Concepcion as one of your endorsers, which indicates that despite the fact that he has been doing and will continue to do the same thing more or less, in a different way, of course – you have your own ways, old techniques – that you see each other not as competitors but as partners. And that is the heart of what we are doing here – that we are trying to work together.

We spoke a lot. Isinisigaw natin noong kampanya na kailangan magkaisa. Iyan ang aking tinutukoy. Iyang mga ganyang klaseng programa na nagtutulungan imbes na naglalabanan dahil ang makikinabang talaga diyan ay ang taong-bayan, 'yung mga maliliit na matutulungan natin.

So, magpapasalamat kami sa lahat ng mga na-involve para mabuo itong *Kanegosyo*, of course, powered by Cebuana Lhuillier. Jean Henri assures me that we will have many other partners in this. And that's part of the PPP concept that we have tried to encourage in government.

So, this is a program that brings many, many elements together and I am sure that if we continue to be committed to work hard and to be sensitive to the needs of the people, magiging successful naman siguro ang ating mga ginagawa sa pagtulong and to create that ecosystem for the small businesses to be able to thrive and hopefully turn small businesses into larger businesses as they go down the road.

So, congratulations once again to the *Kanegosyo* program. Congratulations to Jean Henri. I know that we still have a lot of work ahead of us.

But nonetheless, you can be assured that we are working together very closely down the same direction you, in the private sector, and us, in the government, helping one another so that we can transform this economy so as to be able to be competitive worldwide and find ourselves as an investment destination, as a thriving economy with a stable situation in our country.

That is the dream and that is the aspiration. I sincerely believe that with programs like this, with all of us working together, we can achieve that.

Thank you very much and good morning. *[applause]*

--- END ---